

## **The effect of pair work on students' writing skill for Junior High School**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research is to see how pair work affects students' descriptive text writing skills. A quantitative research design was adopted in this study. It was a quasi-experimental study using a pre-test and post-test control design. The participants in the study were junior high school students in grades VIII F and VIII G in Madiun, East Java, Indonesia. There were 26 students in grades VIII F and 26 students in grades VIII G. There are 52 students in total. Giving the students a writing test was used to collect data. The descriptive writing test was employed as the instrument. The students were categorized into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. The data was analyzed using an independent t-test in SPSS version 16. The result of this research shows that pair work attests significant difference on the means score of the students' writing skill on descriptive text for junior high school. Based on the score of the test, the significance value of t-test for equality of means is 0,000. It is less than  $\alpha = 0,05$  ( $0,000 < 0,05$ ). Then, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. It means that there is significant difference on the students' writing means score in descriptive text after using pair work. Based on the findings, it can be stated that adopting pair work to improve students' descriptive text writing skills in junior high school is successful. Furthermore, pair work allows students to interact with their partners about the issue, gather knowledge, and correct their written content collaboratively. As a result, the teacher must be able to maintain control over the class in order for learning activities to perform efficiently. In the future, researchers are encouraged to do a study on pair work, particularly with eighth-grade junior high school students who are taught to a variety of text types.*

**Keywords:** *pair work; writing skill; descriptive text*

### **Introduction**

Writing is defined as the skill to link words together to form a sentence, paragraph, or essay, so the writer must be able to string words together

appropriately. It is a mental process that involves generating ideas, deciding how to convey them in good writing, and organizing them into clear sentences and multiple paragraphs. This demonstrates that pupils are required to compose effective sentences in paragraphs. Students are expected to investigate their ideas and put them into written communication in the form of a writing. According to [Patel and Jain \(2008\)](#), writing is a skill that must be taught and practiced. As a result, writing skills can be improved by doing a lot of writing. Furthermore, several studies on writing activities in the classroom have been conducted to assist students communicate their ideas and write better writing by employing image series and YouTube videos ([Styati, 2016](#)), as well as CMC and F2F ([Vendityaningtyas & Styati, 2018](#)), using digital photographs ([Styati, 2017](#)), and using graphic organizers ([Styati & Irawati, 2020](#)).

Using the right teaching strategies can influence the learning process of writing so that learning objectives can be achieved. Many of the teachers have tried many strategies, techniques, methods, and many ways to have better teaching learning process especially in writing class. Nowadays, working with the other students can help the teaching learning process run well ([Styati & Latief, 2018](#)). The use of collaborative work arouses the students' attention to take the part on the classroom activity. The students can exchange their ideas to one another ([Styati & Rodliyah, 2021](#)). One of the strategies that can be employed to work together is using pair work. It is working with the peers to discuss about the ideas before starting to write the ideas.

Many research have been done on pair work to assist students in writing paragraphs and essays. According to a study by [Styati and Latief \(2018\)](#), pair work provides students with greater opportunities to collaborate and share ideas in writing. According to [Styati and Rodliyah \(2021\)](#), proficiency influences students' capacity to work in groups and actively participate in the production of an argumentative essay. Furthermore, it is thought that pair work, as an efficient method of teaching writing, can assist students better write their thoughts into sentences, paragraphs, and essays. It is a type of pair work learning that allows students to communicate with one another while also improving social interaction. [Raja and Saeed \(2012\)](#) claims that students must be taught how to work in groups in order to comprehend the value of communication in the classroom. As a result, it is critical for students in the class to communicate with one another in order to discuss perspectives and ideas in order to overcome problems related to learning challenges. According to [Supiani \(2017\)](#) employing collaborative learning to teach writing is the best technique to enhance writing abilities since students can follow the writing process effortlessly and flexibly. As a result, the quality of student writing products will improve.

There are numerous advantages to employing this method. Increased self-confidence, active inter-group interactions, student comprehension, and the ability to engage with groups are just a few of the benefits of pair work that have

been discovered. Annisa (2016) has studied that focused on improving students' capacity to write by utilizing companion work and short classroom action research activities. The test score between employing pair work and mini classroom action research activities increased as a result of the analysis. According to Mukammilah (2017), the research on employing pair work activity to increase students' writing paragraph ability is promising. Through a pair work exercise, the study aims to improve students' capacity to write paragraphs. Pair work is a good exercise for improving students' skill to write paragraphs.

Then, the pair work is one of the way that requires the students to work with the partner to share the information one another. Styati and Latief (2018) recommend to investigate on pair work by classifying the pair based on proficiency to have better writing. It is expected that the students can share their ideas and information with their partner about the topic to create better work within the peers. Each student will get knowledge from the partner which he/she does not know before. Students will be accustomed to giving and receiving motivation from partner appropriately and effectively. Besides, the students must be open to constructive criticism or suggestions from their partners.

The present study aims to investigate the effect of pair work on students' writing skill in descriptive text for junior high school. The use of pair work is very suitable to be applied in learning writing descriptive text for junior high school students, because it is easy to implement in the classroom. Thus, by employing pair work can help students in writing descriptive text better.

## Research Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental approach with a pre-test and post- test control design. The aim of this study was to investigate if using pair work on students' descriptive writing skills in junior high school made significant difference. To perform this study, the researchers used two classes of second grade junior high school students as the experiment and control classes throughout the first semester. The experiment class employed pair work, whereas the control class employed traditional instruction. The study's structure was as follows.

Table 1. Pre-test Post-test Control Design

Pre-test	Pair work	Post-test
Pre-test	Conventional teaching	Post-test

This research was conducted at one of the junior high schools in Madiun, East java, Indonesia. The population of this research was the entire students of

the eighth grade students. The study used random sampling. The researcher employed two classes as samples. Class VIII F and class VIII G were chosen as the sample of this research. VIII F as the experimental group and VIII G as the controlled group. There were 26 students in each class, so the researcher took 52 students as the sample. In the experimental class was employed pair work. The students were paired based on students' proficiency. Student's proficiency was obtained from the previous writing scores. There were 13 students with high writing grades and 13 students with low writing grades. Students whose writing scores were high will be paired with students whose writing scores are low. So that, in the experimental class there were 13 pairs.

The researcher used a test to collect data on writing for students in both the experimental and control classes. The descriptive writing test was utilized as a pre-test and post-test study instrument. The writing test was based on the 2013 Curriculum's KI and KD for eighth grade junior high school. This was accomplished by adopting some components from the book *When English Rings a Bell*, resulting in a standard instrument that included core skills, instructional materials, an indicator, and a pattern for the writing activity. The students' writing was evaluated using a scoring criteria that included organization, logic, grammar, punctuation, and style. For each component, the range of scores is 5- 20. A student's writing score might range from 100 to 25, with a minimum of 25.

The data analysis technique used in this study was using independent t-test in SPSS 16 version. It focused on answering the question, if there is significant difference in students' writing score between students who were taught by using pair work and who were taught by using conventional teaching.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The result of main data in the present study shows that use of pair work has significant difference for teaching writing descriptive text. It means that there is a significant difference on the use of pair work toward students' writing skill before and after the implementation. By the results of writing test score, it has been revealed that the use of pair work is helpful in teaching writing descriptive text for junior high school. There are data of descriptive statistics, normality, and independent sample t-test:

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of post-test data

	<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>					
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
experimental class	26	34	60	94	79	10
control class	26	40	40	80	65	11
Valid N (listwise)	26					

The statistics of the data of post-test above shows that the amount of the students (N) in experimental class is 26 students. The minimum score is 60 and the range is 34. Then the maximum score is 94 with the standard deviation is 10. Then, the minimum score of control class is 40 and the range is 40 with standard deviation is 11. The maximum score of control class is 80. The difference of the mean score of experimental class and control class is 14. It can be seen that, the scores of experimental class are higher than the scores of the control class.

Table 3. The result of normality test of post-test data

		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
Post-test	Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
		Experimental Class	.146	26	.158	.938	26
	Control Class	.122	26	.200*	.930	26	.077

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The table above shows the normality of the post-test data from both classes. The data are normal if the significance level value  $> 0.05$ . It means the data come from a normally distributed sample. If the significance value is  $< 0.05$  means the data come from a sample that are not normally distributed. The analysis is done by using Shapiro-Wilk. The result of the test shows that the significance value of experimental class is 0,118 and the control class is 0,077. The significance value both classes are more than  $\alpha = 0,05$  ( $0,118 > 0,05$ ;  $0,077 > 0,05$ ). Thus, the post-test data from both classes are normally distributed, so independent sample t-test can be done.

Table 4. The group statistic of the post-test data of both classes

		Group Statistics			
		Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Experimental Class	26	79	10	1.9
	Control Class	26	65	11	2.1

The table above shows that the mean score of both classes are very closed. The means score for experimental class is 79. Then, the mean score of control class is 65. Based on the score, it can be considered that both of the

group have different mean score. This is not enough to be an evidence to state the successfulness of the treatment of the experimental class. The following independent sample t-test is needed to know how far the significant difference of both class.

Table 5. The result of independent sample t-test of post-test data

		<b>Independent Samples Test</b>								
		<b>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</b>		<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>						
		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Std. Error Difference</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</b>	
								<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>	
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.014	.91	4.91	50	.000	14.23	2.89	8.41	20.04
	Equal variances not assumed			4.91	49.73	.000	14.23	2.89	8.41	20.04

The table above shows the analysis of the post-test data from the class which has been treated by using pair work and the class which has been taught using conventional teaching. The analysis is done by using independent sample t-test. Based on the score of the test, the significance value of t-test for equality of means is 0,000. It is less than  $\alpha = 0,05$  ( $0,000 < 0,05$ ). Then, according to decision-making basis in the independent sample t-test, H1 which is there is significant difference on the students' writing skill taught by using pair work and conventional teaching on descriptive text for junior high school is accepted and H0 which is there is no significant difference on the students' writing skill taught by of using a pair work and conventional teaching on students' writing skill in descriptive text for junior high school is rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference in the students' writing skill in descriptive text between experimental class and control class.

## Discussion

In this discussion section, the researchers discuss the result of the study about the effect of pair work in teaching descriptive writing text for junior high school. The result of the research shows that the use of pair work has significant difference on the means score for teaching writing descriptive text. There are some reasons to support the result. First, the use of pair work can improve the students' ability in developing the ideas of the text. Second, the use

of pair work makes the students more active and socialize with friends. The last, the use of pair work affects the students' self-confidence of students in writing lessons.

Based on the results presented in the previous section, the two groups show the different scores on the writing test. It is because there is better result on writing in the group which given treatment. The students interact with each other to discuss the topic of writing and to share their knowledge. Meanwhile, the group with conventional teaching work individually without any treatment. The students are given the materials as it should the class regular schedule. The students have difficulty in solving problems in writing. They cannot share the information and ideas. Therefore, pair work is more effective than individual work. It is in line with [Zohairy \(2014\)](#) who states that using pair work as a strategy for language learning give positive effect for students, especially in receiving the learning material. Students are more enthusiastic in learning by using pair work strategies rather than individual learning. Pair work is an effective learning strategy for students. By using pair work, the students help each other in finding ideas and developing the topics. Students can ask each other for opinions about determining the correct word writing, sentence structure, grammar, and writing style.

The group of students which is given treatment produced the writing text better than the group of students without treatment. This proves that the application of pair work in writing has a significant effect for the students. It is line with the research result of [Mukammilah \(2017\)](#), who mention that there is improvement in both of the students' writing skills and effectiveness of teaching learning process when pair work is applied. She also states that pair work can enrich the students' language development. The use of pair work makes it easier for teachers to implement learning activities. Besides, the students are also more interested in writing and easily understand in accepting the learning material. It makes learning activities in the classroom run effectively.

It is also similar to the research result by [Annisa \(2016\)](#), who states there is an improvement on students' writing skill by applying pair work activity. She also states that pair work activity could increase the students' ability in writing descriptive text. The improvement of students' ability in writing is based on the collaboration of students in pairs. According to [Moon \(2005\)](#) the students believe that working in pairs will help their language learning. In this strategy, the students share knowledge about sentence structure, choosing the right words, and sharing the vocabulary they know. Besides, they also give motivation to each other. Students with higher abilities will help their partners in solving the problems. The activity of sharing information will increase the students' knowledge and abilities in writing.

Teaching writing descriptive texts by using pair work helps the teachers to implement effective and different learning. By using this strategy, the teachers are more active in teaching, because in this case the teacher is required to pay more attention to students and organize the learning activities to run in a conducive and effective situation. In addition, teachers are also more creative by developing teaching method or strategy. Mukammilah (2017) states that students will be interested in teaching activity on writing and easy to understand the learning material by implementing better writing activities. In conventional teaching, the teacher usually only explains the material from the book in a short time. It is not effective and sometimes it makes students confused in understanding the material. Every student has a different level of knowledge and abilities. So, the teachers should be more innovative and creative in teaching to meet the students' needs.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the students who are taught by using pair work has better writing skill than the students who are taught by using conventional teaching. In other words, pair work has significant positive effect on students' writing skill especially in writing descriptive text. The students who are treated working in pairs are students are able to work with partners, the students are encouraged to socialize one another, the students can work actively and to share knowledge by discussing the ideas and topics of writing. It will encourage students to be able to enrich their writing skills and to produce qualified writing. This is in line with the results of the study in table 2 which shows the mean of Experimental class is 79 and the mean of Control class is 65. The mean of experimental class is higher than control class. Besides, the significance value of Equality of Means shows that sig 0.00 which is less than 0.05. This means that the written product of students which is using pair work are better than students with conventional teaching. Besides, from the result of this study it can be concluded that the pair work can be used by the teacher as an effective for teaching writing.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of data analysis in the previous section, it can be seen that the use of pair work has significant effect on students' writing skill in descriptive text. The results of post-test calculation using independent t-test. It was explained that the significant value equal variance assumptions is 0,000. It is less than  $\alpha = 0,05$  ( $0,000 < 0,05$ ). According to decision-making basis in the independent sample t-test, the H1 is accepted. It means "There is significant difference on the students writing descriptive text who are taught by using pair work and conventional teaching for junior high school". The students who are treated working in pairs are students are able to work with partners, the students are encouraged to socialize one another, the students can work actively and to share knowledge by discussing the ideas and topics of writing. It

will encourage students to be able to enrich their writing skills and to produce qualified writing.

Based on the explanation above, the use of pair work as a students learning strategy in writing can provide motivation for students to write actively. Therefore, the students' writing performance by using pair work is better than students who do not use pair work strategy. This shows that pair work strategy is effective on students' writing skill in descriptive text for junior high school. The teachers must be more active in providing understanding and benefits of pair work to students because some students are reluctant to be paired with friends they do not like. Besides, the teacher must be able to control the class so that the learning activities run conducive. The study realizes it has limitation in treating the students using pair work where the interaction between partners makes the class very crowded, so the students cannot use the time maximally. The students should consider to have practice more on pair work to have writing English more in order to develop better on their writing skill. They must be able to put their ideas into writing regarding to the rules of writing. The students are still confused to have better vocabulary to enrich their written text. The further researchers are expected to develop a study of pair work, especially those applied to other grade junior high school students with different classification of the pair.

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